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Speaker Naize highlights Council accomplishments and outlines objectives

WINDOW ROCK – On the opening day of the Winter Council Session, Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) provided a report that focused on the accomplishments of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council and also outlined goals and objectives for the last year of the current term.

Although Speaker Naize did not provide his report orally on Monday, the report was made available for the public.

Among Council's accomplishments, Speaker Naize recognized the efforts of the due diligence team, Navajo Nation Department of Justice, Office of the President and Vice President, and members of his own staff for completing the acquisition of the Navajo Mine from BHP Billiton.

"I believe that we have not only side-stepped a potentially disastrous situation in the near closing of the Navajo Mine but we have preserved over \$100 million dollars annually for our Nation, revenue that has put our Nation in a position to double their investment in the next four years," wrote Speaker Naize.

In the written report, Speaker Naize also addressed the need to begin looking into potential renewable energy resources using 10 percent of annual net income from NTEC.

When Council established the Navajo Transitional Energy Company, LLC on April 29, 2013 the Council also approved language within the legislation which specifically states that NTEC will invest 10 percent of its annual net income into the research and development of renewable and alternative sources of energy, storage, and transmission technologies and infrastructure, with an emphasis on solar technology and facilities.

The report also touched on H.R. 3822, the Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014 introduced on Jan. 8 by U.S. Reps. Ben Lujan (N.M.) and Steve Pearce (N.M.) which seeks to divide approximately 21,000 acres of parceled land known as the Fort Wingate Military Depot, located six-miles east of Gallup, N.M.

Speaker Naize mentioned that members of affected communities such as Churchrock and Iyanbito had expressed "discontent" and "concern" regarding the proposed land division and urged Rep. Lujan to meet with the affected community members to address their concerns.

"Delegate Edmund Yazzie wanted to ensure that his communities were heard as the negotiated land division is brought to conclusion through a congressional resolution," Speaker Naize wrote.

Speaker Naize also continued to advocate for the New Mexico State Legislature's approval of the Nation's proposed Gaming Compact which was discussed by the state's Committee on Compacts at an informational meeting held last Wednesday.

"Representatives from the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, Navajo Nation Department of Justice, Office of the President, and outside consultants worked tirelessly to successfully negotiate a compact that is agreeable with the Governor's Office," Speaker Naize wrote. "I look forward to completing the compact by the end of the month."

A vote on the proposed Compact is expected to take place during the State Legislature's 30-day legislative session which began on Jan. 21.

In the written report, Speaker Naize also noted several ongoing issues that he feels need to be completed in the upcoming year including working toward a viable solution to the ongoing efforts to establish the Nation's "Department of Health", finalizing a compact for Navajo Technical University, creating a cooperative agreement for conducting the Land Buy-Back Program on the Navajo Nation, and developing a Veterans Act to benefit Navajo Veterans.

To view Speaker Naize's full report, please visit:

http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/pressReleases/2014/JAN/27JAN2014_Speaker_Naize_Report_2014_Winter_Session.pdf

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